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# ISRAEL'S RESURRECTION;

OR,

LIFE FROM THE DEAD

BY E. F. STROETER.



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A. C. GAEBELEIN, Superintendent,

E. F. STROETER, Secretary.

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## ISRAEL'S RESURRECTION; OR, LIFE FROM THE DEAD.

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"What shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?"  
Rom. ii. 15.

Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, is magnifying his office, and in the Holy Spirit revealing to us believers of the Gentiles the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God in His marvellous dealings with Israel, the chosen people. How earnest his warnings to us not to boast against those broken-off branches, and to remember that we do not bear the root, but that the root (Israel) bears us. What an impressive object lesson for us—behold the severity of God on them which fell. God spared them not. They were the natural branches. See how He dealt with them! Be not highminded, Gentile Christendom, but fear! Why should God spare thee any more than He did His own if thou abide not in His goodness? And, alas! did we abide? Shall Gentile Christendom escape? And, once more, "I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery (of Israel's only partial and temporary blindness) lest ye should be wise in your own conceits!" Precisely what has come upon Gentile Christianity. The faithful warnings of our apostle have not been heeded. The blindness which has befallen the Gentile church concerning God's marvelous purposes in and with Israel, is truly amazing. Blessed be God that even to those in Laodicea there is the counsel and the offer to come and buy of Him eye salve to anoint the eyes that we may see! Rev. iii: 18. May our eyes be truly anointed to see that we stumble not in our walk; but, as the shadows of proud unbelief in the churches deepen all around us, we may be enabled to walk in the light and hold fast the profession of our hope. For glorious things are here spoken of God's chosen people, Israel. And when that nauseous thing, the lukewarm Laodicean church, shall have been spewed out of His mouth, and the utter failure of the Gentile branches clearly established, then God is to have another witness for Himself, even His own Israel, the broken-off branches, now dead, dried and withered, whose hope in their own eyes

is lost, who say we are cut off for our parts Ezek. xxxvii: 11. For God is able to graft them in again. And this receiving of Israel, the apostle truly says, will be "life from the dead."

We must not think, however, that Paul here announces a new principle of God's dealings with His own people, Israel. It appears, rather, that the apostle simply states that this is the very thing for which Israel stands in God's economy from the beginning, namely, life from the dead. Thus Israel's final restoration and resurrection will be not only in perfect harmony with Israel's calling, but it will bring the glorious consummation on a grand national scale of this marvellous display of divine power in grace and in judgment—through death into life—which has been the divine stamp and mark on Israel

Abraham had believed God. By faith he had gone out, not from the beginning. Thus it will be fulfilled what is spoken in Isaiah xliii: 21, This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise.

Let us turn, then, to Israel's history as it has been revealed to us, and we shall discover the unmistakable teachings of this principle—life from the dead—in type and shadow, from the very beginning. And in Christ, the first-born from the dead, we have the pattern and earnest of the glorious realization of all that has been foreshadowed, in and through the working of that mighty power of God which He wrought when He raised Him from the dead, and whereby the risen Christ is now able to subdue all things to Himself. Eph. i: 19, 20; Phil. iii: 21.

I. *Isaac, the first type of this principle. Life from the dead.* knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles; declining to build up and reform Sodom, which Lot attempted. And when God made still larger demands upon Abraham's faith he was able to meet them. So when the Lord called the childless chief under the starry sky, and bade the Chaldean, who was no stranger to the marvels of the heavens, to number the stars, and then added, So shall thy seed be for multitude. Abraham's faith did not stagger at the magnitude of that promise, nor at the absence of even the first sign of a speedy fulfillment. He believed on the Lord and He counted it to him for righteousness.

Then Abram, not without faith in the divine promise of seed, but in ignorance of the divine method of fulfillment, hearkened to the voice of his wife Sarai, and at her own suggestion took to himself her Egyptian bondwoman, Hagar, who bore him a son, Ishmael. That was the fruit of man's effort to help the Lord in the fulfillment of His promises. And when, after thirteen years of divine silence, the Lord's time had come to give Abram and Sarai both a new name, we hear Abraham still say to the Lord: O that Ishmael might live before thee! But what saith the Lord? Sarah, thy wife, shall bear thee a son indeed: and thou shalt call his name Isaac—which is laughter. And in Isaac shall thy seed be called; with him—not with Ishmael—will I establish my covenant for an everlasting covenant. Gen. xvii: 19.

Did this cause laughter to Sarah? But it was the Lord who had prepared a laughter for Himself in Isaac. It is God who thus laughs at human responsibilities and impotence. For Isaac could not be born and must not be born according to the word of the Lord until Sarah was past age and had become as good as dead. And thus Isaac, in whom the seed of promise is called, and from whom (not from Ishmael) sprang Israel, God's chosen people, represents in his own conception and birth this wonderful principle—life from the dead.

That this is clearly so was made very plain when, after many days, the word of the Lord came again unto Abraham concerning this same Isaac, the heir of the promise. Take now thy son, says God, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering . . . Gen. xxii: 2. This word of the Lord to Abraham affords a fine opportunity for us all to show how we regard it. Was it the word of the Lord or was it merely Abraham's own conception of his religious obligation, afterwards corrected by divine interference or clearer light on the subject? That is the fair issue. If Abraham was ready to slaughter his own son without a real word of the Lord then he is no longer the father of all believers in the word of the Lord, but the father of all the maniacs and child murderers! But we have the clear and inspired record, By faith Abraham, when he was tried offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son. Heb. ii: 17. This is conclusive.



And can we doubt what was the wonderful purpose of God in this severe trial? True enough when we say, God delights to cast into the fire the gold of faith which He Himself has created. So He does. But this does not by any means exhaust the meaning of this trial. The apostle in Hebrews plainly tells us that there was more, when he says of Abraham, accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; *from whence also he received him in a figure.* Heb. ii: 19.

This, then, is the divine commentary to that wonderful sacrifice by faith in which Abraham, our father, simply foreshadows Him who in the fulness of time would sacrifice and deliver up unto death—not in a figure, but in awful reality—His only begotten Son, and on the third day would bring Him up alive from the dead forevermore, no more in a figure, but in glorious resurrection reality. Thus Isaac had to become as one dead to his own father for three days. But on the third day was given back alive from the dead—in a figure—to his father. The principle which controlled his birth—life from the dead—has found its full and clear confirmation.

Christ. Let us consider it once more. The parallel and cor-

We have anticipated some of the fulfillment of this figure in correspondence are divinely complete. Shadow answers to substance in every detail. Could not Isaac be born to his father until, humanly speaking, all hope of realizing his desire for an heir from Sarah was clean gone? Neither could the greater Isaac—the only begotten of the Father—be born until the fullness of time had come, i. e., until the womb of the nation Israel, from which he was to spring forth, had become utterly dead and barren. For “as a root out of dry ground” He was to grow up. Not in the time of Solomon’s glory, not in the hopeful period of Josiah’s or Hezekiah’s reformation—but only after dead formalism had reduced the nation to very “dry ground” was He born in whom God had purposed, before the world was, to establish forever this marvelous principle of His dealings with Israel and the race—life from the dead.

What was it that so staggered Peter and all the disciples, even after the revelation from the Father in heaven had been given to them that this Man Jesus was the very Christ of God? Was it not the calmness, the unshakable assurance of this truly recognized “Hope of Israel,” with which He announced to

them then and there that the Son of Man must suffer and die, and rise again? Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. John xii: 24. All fruit-bearing is on the principle—life from the dead. This Son of Man knew the Scriptures concerning Himself. He was never in doubt as to the final outcome of it all. He saw clearly it was into death—but from death unto life. Life from the dead—no other method of redemption; no other way to secure the fruits of divine planting.

2. *The Birth of the Nation.* In this we recognize two distinct and characteristic stages. Both set forth very clearly the same divine principle of redemptive action—life from the dead. The first stage is the marvelous deliverance of the first born of Israel from the judgment which smote all the first born in Egypt. The second is the passage of the entire nation—men, women and children—through the Red Sea.

(a) The deliverance of the firstborn. Israel is my son, even my firstborn, saith the Lord, Exod. iv: 22, 23. This was the announcement of Moses to Pharaoh. Therefore, let my son go; if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn. And so it came to pass that there were plagues passed over all the land of Egypt and Pharaoh was only the more hardened by them. But when the Lord, according to His word, smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt in that awful midnight hour, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle; then indeed Pharaoh rose up in that same night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians, and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead. And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone, Exod. xii: 29-32.

And how were Israel's firstborn spared? For the Lord passed over the houses of the children of Israel in that self-same night, when He smote the Egyptians, and delivered their houses, so that all the firstborn in Israel remained alive. Their deliverance itself truly was life from the dead. Every Egyptian house an house of mourning where a firstborn lay dead.

But all the firstborn in Israel brought out alive from the dead. And how was it accomplished? According to the same wonderful formula—life from the dead. For on the tenth day of that month every head of a household in all Israel had taken a lamb, without blemish, a male of the first year, and had kept the same until the fourteenth day of the same month. What did they do with it then? Did they contemplate its spotless innocence, its unblemished character? Did they say, Oh, what a pity to slay the dear little lamb! Why not spare its life and hold the precious thing alive in our loving arms when the avenging angel passes through to smite the firstborn? If the men of Israel had refused, as many modern Christians do, to believe in the “blood-theology” of the Lord their God, their firstborn would have been smitten, as Egypt’s were. It was the blood of the slain lamb, not the ideal character of the living lamb, which saved Israel’s firstborn. It was life from the dead. And thus it was written in blood over the door of every Hebrew house in all the land of Goshen—We are saved, as God’s firstborn nation, by the blood of the lamb that was slain. A wonderful, mighty object lesson, whose remembrance is perpetuated in the passover celebration in Israel from generation to generation until this day. Its import is unmistakable. For, says Paul to the Corinthians, even Christ our passover is sacrificed (margin, is slain) for us, 1 Cor. v: 7. There is no salvation in the spotless life of the lamb of God without blemish; but there is life and salvation and deliverance in His precious blood. And this is the new song which the four living ones the four and twenty elders sing, falling down before the Lamb in the midst of the throne, Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, Rev. v: 9. He is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. In Him we have redemption through His blood, Eph. i: 7; Col. i: 14. The spotless character of the man Christ Jesus was indeed essential; or else His blood could have never availed. But men are not saved and cannot be saved from the wrath, even though they dwelt in rapt contemplation for ages upon the beauties and excellencies of that matchless life. To the death with the spotless lamb! is the divine sentence. Thus and thus only are the firstborn kept alive from the dead.



(b) *The passage through the Red Sea.* This is the second great characteristic stage in the wonderful object lesson before us. The firstborn first; afterwards the entire nation—men, women, children and all their cattle, not a hoof left behind. This is the divine order. But this likewise sets forth the same all-pervading truth—life from the dead.

And it came to pass when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them and the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light. Soon the command is given to the mighty host of between two and three million souls to turn and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, over against Baal-zephon, by the sea. A strange and incomprehensible order from the standpoint of military tactics. If Moses alone was responsible for this move, it was a most stupendous blunder. For it was leading that teeming multitude into a very death-trap. But all this was in the divine purpose. Pharaoh was to be led into believing that Israel was hopelessly entangled in the land, that the wilderness had shut them in. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, said the Lord, that he shall follow after them; and I will be honored upon Pharaoh and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord. His own people, the children of Israel, did not understand the wonderful purpose of God. Thus they became sore afraid when they saw the Egyptians marching after them, and apparently there was no escape from the wrath of Pharaoh. And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt?

Has it not been ever thus? Is it not the same unto this day? even God's own people, brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand, slow of heart to enter into the marvelous dispensations of God with His firstborn!

And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward: but lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea, *Exod. xiv: 15, 16.* Could not the Lord God of Israel have caused that great army to march over the surface of the deep waters as on solid ground?

Undoubtedly. The miracle would not have been any greater than the one He performed in their behalf. Did not Jesus cause Peter to come to Him on the water? And thus the millions of Israel, redeemed out of Egypt, might have safely been carried over the waves without bridge or pontoon! But the lesson would have been lost. What was to be that lesson? We find the answer in 1 Cor. x: 1, 2, where Paul explains, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. The allusion to baptism makes the meaning of his going through the midst of the sea very plain—they were to be buried in the sea, in a figure, and to be brought up, alive from the dead, on the other shore!

Jehovah causes his entire people to go down into death, as it were; Himself causes the waters of the sea to stand on either side as the walls of a mighty grave. But they all go through the midst of it as on dry ground under the glory cloud, and the rising of the morning finds them alive, on the heights of resurrection as it were, while the shore of the Red Sea at their feet is strewn with the dead bodies of the Egyptians, who miserably perished. Then Moses and the children of Israel sing a song of deliverance unto the Lord who brought the waters of the sea upon the hosts of Pharaoh, but the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea—alive from the dead.

3. *The blossoming of Aaron's rod.* We read in Num. xvii. how the Lord gave commandment to Moses to lay up in the tabernacle of the congregation before the testimony twelve rods, a rod apiece, for each prince one, according to their father's houses. And every man's name was written upon his rod, and Aarons name was on the rod of Levi. And Moses laid up the rods before the Lord in the tabernacle of witness. And it came to pass that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded and brought forth buds and bloomed blossoms and yielded almonds.

In chapter xviii: 7 the word of the Lord to Aaron is accordingly: Therefore thou and thy sons with thee shall keep your priest's office for everything of the altar, and within the vail; and ye shall serve: I have given your priest's office unto you

as a gift; and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.

This, then, clearly is the divine establishment of the Aaronic priesthood in Israel over against the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram. Now the question comes, naturally, what does the Aaronic priesthood stand for? The Scriptures contain the answer. For we read in Num. iii: 12, 13: And I, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of all the firstborn that openeth the matrix among the children of Israel; therefore the Levites shall be mine; because all the firstborn are mine; for on the day that I smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I hallowed unto me all the firstborn in Israel, both men and beast: mine shall they be: I am the Lord. Nothing can be clearer in the light of this Scripture than that the house of Aaron represents Israel's firstborn. Of the firstborn the Lord had spoken immediately after the exodus from Egypt (Ex. xiii: 2), Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb, among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine. The Aaronic priesthood, then, stands for Israel's national prerogative, as Jehovah's firstborn son among the nations. For this was the word of the Lord unto Pharaoh. Thus saith the Lord: Israel is my son, even my firstborn (Ex. iv: 22). In our previous paper we saw very clearly how the Lord delivered the firstborn of Israel by the blood of the slain lamb, and on the principle of "life from the dead." Here it is the same again. Israel, God's firstborn son among the nations, is to take the place of (kings and) priests in behalf of the nations for blessing. This priestly office of the nation has never yet been performed by the nation. We would greatly err, if we would suppose that it never will. Aaron's blossoming rod is prophecy and promise of the future budding and blossoming of Israel as the priestly (as well as the royal) people of Jehovah. The gifts and calling of God are without repentance, saith the Scripture. For it is not on account of any natural life or excellency in the rod of Aaron that it was made to bud and blossom and to yield almonds, all in one night. Aaron's rod was just as dead a stick as any of the other rods. Nor was it a particularly fine quality of dead timber, that the Lord should choose it. God's election does not depend on, nor is it influ-



enced by, any consideration of natural ability or qualification. On the contrary, the foolish things of the world, and the weak things, and the base things, and the things which are despised, yea, and things which are not, these are the things which God chooses, that before Him no flesh may glory.

Israel's failure, then, to occupy the position of God's firstborn son among the nations of the earth thus far, does not in the least invalidate God's purpose in choosing Israel for that very position. For it was the *dead* stick of Aaron which was made to bud and to bear fruit in a single night. And so when the night of Israel's deadness, blindness and unfruitfulness is past, it will be found that even the dead stick of Aaron, i. e., God's chosen priestly people, shall bud and blossom and yield precious fruit unto the Lord. As it is written in the prophecy of Isaiah (Isa. xxvii: 6), He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit. But not until God shall have made Israel alive from the dead. And then it will be once more, Life from the dead.

4. *Jonah, a type of the nation.* If Aaron represents the priestly position and office of God's chosen people among the nations of earth, then Jonah unmistakably foreshadows Israel's great prophetic mission to the Gentiles. The story is a most instructive one. Its significance as setting forth the doctrine of the resurrection in a figure has been clearly established by the very highest authority, that of the Lord Jesus Himself. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (Matt xii: 40).

The applicability of the story of Jonah to the Jewish nation is almost self-evident. In fact, it has been clearly recognized by the Jews themselves. To quote the words of a Jewish writer on the subject:

"The ancient rabbis regarded it (the book of Jonah) so highly that they ordained it to be read in the synagogue entire on the day of the year most sacred for Jewish devotion—on the Atonement or Kippur day. The reason for assigning such an important place to the book of Jonah in the ritual of the synagogue is that from the beginning to the end it typifies 'a prophet against his will,' a character which the Jewish people



have recognized since the earliest beginnings of their history, and it is not hazardous to say they still recognize . . . A benign deity sent Jonah to convert and to save Nineveh; but he did not wish to go and meditated escape from the power that urged him. Trouble befell him on the voyage to Tarshish and unhesitatingly he confessed to his fellow-travellers who he was; he revealed to them the reason why the storm was raging, and, finally, advised them that they should throw him into the sea in order to save themselves. Thus unconsciously, by the force of circumstances and the impulse of his own disposition, he becomes a preacher to the heathen—just the thing he wanted to avoid. But he thought, perhaps, that he could still avoid following the command of God. If he were thrown into the sea he would get drowned and Nineveh would not be saved. Here again his purpose was foiled. The power that had sent him could rescue him from the sea and land him at the spot it destined for his activity. Arrived there he had no choice but to do what he was ordered; but he did it most ungracefully.”

The same writer continues farther on: “Striking as an illustration of the vicissitudes and disposition of the Hebrew race as this story is, it is the only one in the Old Testament which exposes most eloquently the mission of a Hebrew prophet to a heathen people.” That Israel is destined to fulfill this very mission to all the Gentile nations of the world, cannot for one moment be doubted by those who believe the prophets. And that Israel against its own will, has been God’s greatest object lesson to those very Gentile nations all through the ages, most especially through this present Gentile age, is strikingly set forth by the apostle to us Gentiles in his matchless epistle to the Romans, especially in the eleventh chapter. Tossed on the stormy billows of the great sea of the nations Israel has never (with few exceptions) denied its identity. But most strenuously has the Jew insisted that he has no mission to convert the heathen. He has persistently refused to be what God ever intended him to be, the Lord’s greatest preacher to the world. In Saul of Tarsus, the Lord has shown what a marvelously effective preacher of the righteousness of God, the Jew can and will become in the day when the resurrected “Jonah,” i. e., Israel, brought up alive from the dead out of the sea of

the nations, shall go to the ends of the earth and fill all the world with the sound of the gospel of the kingdom, when it shall be established in Jerusalem and on Mount Zion gloriously. Then we shall see what this age did not bring and could not bring, namely, nations converted and born again in a day. The age of national ingatherings to the Lord of the harvest will not come until first Israel as a nation has been made alive from the dead. For it must still be, as it was from the beginning of Israel's history, "Life from the Dead."





